VILLA JULIE COLLEGE

THE SPECTRUM

MAY

1997

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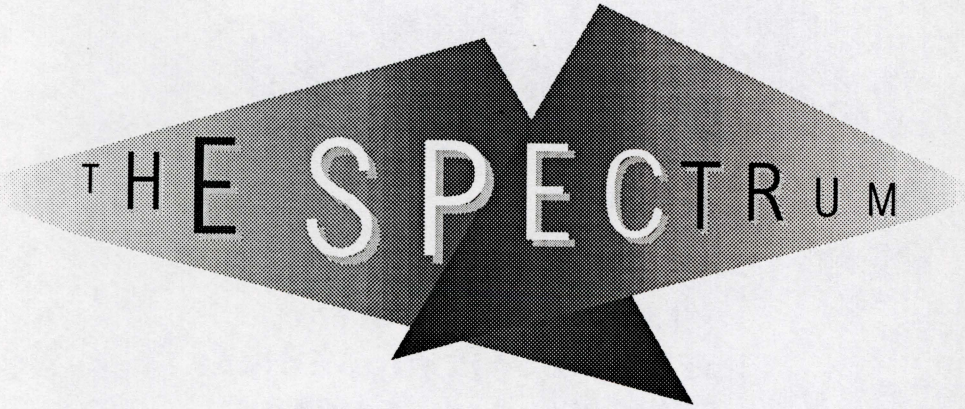

Prose, Poetry, and Art by the students of
Villa Julie College

Villa Julie College * Stevenson, Maryland

Spring 1997

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There Is Some Truth

in what he says
that colorful man I met
in the park
on a Wednesday
he says he's writing a book
about what? I can't be sure
he sits gently
mainly writing
to fill space & time
or just empty pages
he must be succeeding
because he's got notes
scribbled on endless
coffee - stained napkins
& multicolored stick-up pads
& he says
when he makes his first million
he'll buy me a house
in the country
where there aren't any yuppies
& we'll spend our days outside
in the fields
where there aren't any crops
only wildflowers
& he says
I won't need to worry
about driving myself
through the insomnia at night
in the stillness
because he'll hire someone
to do it for me
& to take me to the store
if only he knew
that he'd be the one
going places
because I'll be a recluse
in our fields
breathing wildflowers
all day

Jen Ingersoll

Terrorist Bomber

Poets are like terrorist bombers,
They pick their materials carefully.
Every thought is deliberate.
They wait for the exact moment
to take the right combination of words
and create explosive images,
All to shock the world.

Shelley Warner

A Poet

A poet holding a Saturday Night Special
Words so powerful
Explode
On the page
Words to get your attention
BANG! BANG! You're dead
That leaves an impression

Tiffany Odell

Waiting

Fingers poised—
Waiting for inspiration,
Waiting for words,
Waiting for letters,
Waiting for the Robert E. Lee,
—the Chattanooga Choo Choo
—Godot
—death and taxes
Waiting for life.

Waiting for a poem.

Carol Sapora

Fast-Breaking Fire

When police arrived,
They found the front yard frosted with flakes
Of ash, the roof capped in crunch
Of flame, and the sky spitting up
Rococo puffs of smoke.
Flickering super, golden, and crisp,
The hungry blaze still snapped, crackled,
and popped,
Playing trix on fire fighters.
A total disaster.

When asked what possessed him
To burn down his own home,
The arsonist, who'd always lived alone,
Suggested that maybe he had read
The backs of one too many
Cereal boxes.

Jason Taft

Morning

First one up the next morning,
I was still wearing my jeans,
Too sleepy to undress myself,
Looking at Soda fully clothed
Stretched out beside me,
Asleep with the blanket pulled over him.
He looks younger when he sleeps
So I figured everyone did.

Michelle Webster

A Familiar Stranger

I feel like I'm caught in a "Party of Five" episode. You know, like the one where Julia and Justin break up but still can't let go of each other? They need their space but have forgotten how to live separate lives.

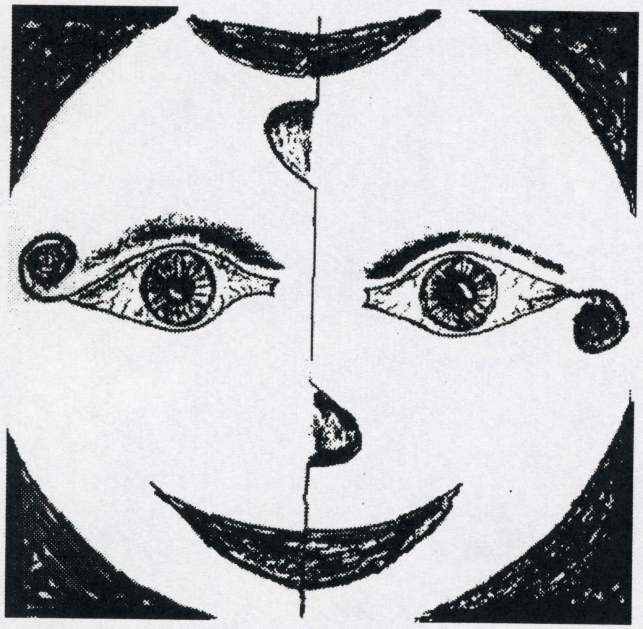
Well, I'm Julia. I'm Julia and I'm in the process of separating from my Justin. It's hard. And it can't be solved in an hour's time. In fact, that's the worst part of this whole ordeal: there is no set time limit for my misery. I may feel better in a week—though I highly doubt it—or maybe even a month, but in all likelihood I am going to feel like Julia's twin for a good, long, torturous time. It sucks. It sucks to wake up alone, it sucks to get an A on a paper and have no one to tell about it, it sucks having to eat a Chi-Chi's ultimate combo meal by yourself, and it definitely sucks to lose your best friend. What really sucks the most, though, is to walk across campus and hope that I'll see him, and then I do see him, but he's with another girl—a skinny, blonde chick—and that's when I wish I had taken the other path to the dining hall. So we all kind of stop awkwardly—him, myself, and his freshman appendage—and try to make small talk about how disgusting the dining hall food really is, and all the while I'm trying to communicate how fine I am without him, and how little I need him in my life, yet at the same time I am restraining myself from flinging my arms around his neck because that's all I want to do anyway.

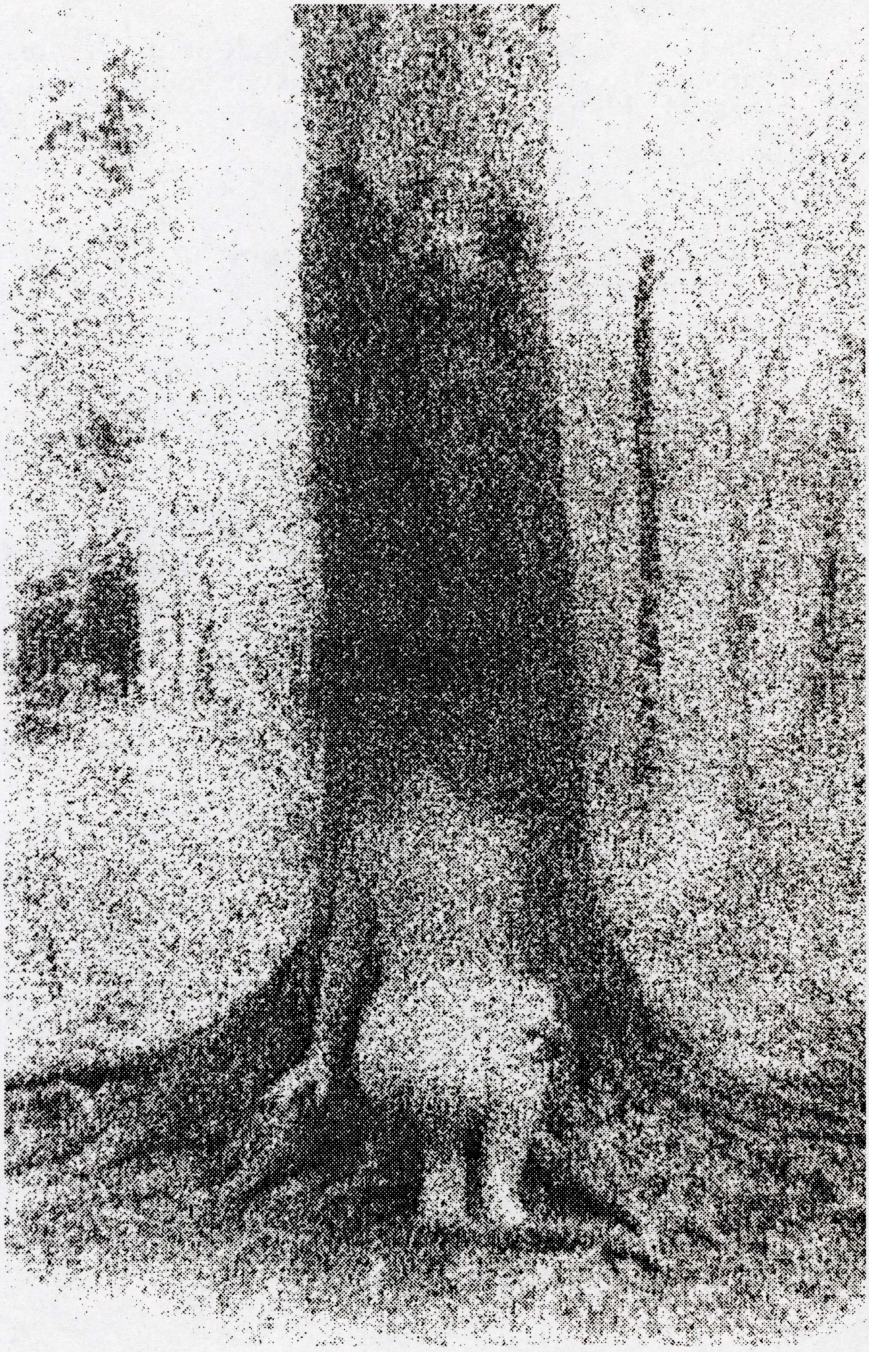
And then I look at this other girl, this creature who looks at him with worshipping eyes and pouty lips, and I chuckle bitterly to myself with the arrogance of a sophomore, taking solace in the fact that her hair is way too big and her clothes are crying "Fashion Police." I remember that I was the one who got drunk with him first, I was the one who skipped class with him first. It was me that found that secluded playground, that met his parents, that held his head after he pounded too many vodka shots, that wasted entire weekends lying in bed with him watching TV and fooling around. She doesn't know about his acne, his skinny ankles, his

treasure trail, his flat feet, or that his ears crinkle at the top like those french fries.

But I do. So I throw a 1000 watt smile at him and his admirer and force myself to walk away from him, head up, back straight: a familiar stranger.

M.L. .J.





6

My Childhood

Morning, day, or evening,
no matter what the weather
a perfect day for Wiffle Ball.

My childhood years,
spent in my backyard,
the local Memorial Stadium.

Usually just Dominic and I,
he was the Angels,
I was the Orioles.

In the alley a single,
the opposite yard a double,
and those grapevines a four bagger.

We'd play hours at a time,
dreaming
of the big leagues.

One day the dream came true
for Dominic.
A letter from the Indians.

He could be a star,
but he said no,
and I always wondered why.

Looking back, I now know.
It's not about being
a star.

It's about
a game
we love.

Terry McClung, Jr.

When the Music Stops

I wake up, sift through the sand in my eyes, and find sight. I stare at myself in the mirror and watch a reflected retina follow me around the room. It is 11:32 p.m. I missed the synthesized sound of the clock telling me I am half an hour late. The clock's digital numbers, blue and bold, free me from the oppressive darkness (I have always feared that setting the alarm for the exact time, 11:30, will bring disaster. . . we all have our superstitions). The shower cries and its tears wake me from a lazy daze that left me alone in the silence of sleep. I begin to dress, drape myself in baggy jeans and an oversized sweatshirt, and let my boots bring me to my destination.

I stand outside the club, slip through the line of frozen figures in the numbing night air, and make my way to the steps. I hear the sound of base bounce in muffled motion against the nearby wall. I look out as the line lingers through the street and around a shadowed corner. In linear perfection they wait to enter, anticipating a night of numbing noise that will undoubtedly leave them deaf by morning. The doorman, a friend of six- foot- three, whose muscles break up the feuds and fights of the inebriated, carries on a careless conversation. He stands as judge and jury for juveniles who attempt to disguise their under-age identity. After a few faces,foreign from the photo on their identification have been forced to flee, he lets me in the door. Blue and broken from bodies being thrown through its barrier, the door squeals hello as I enter.

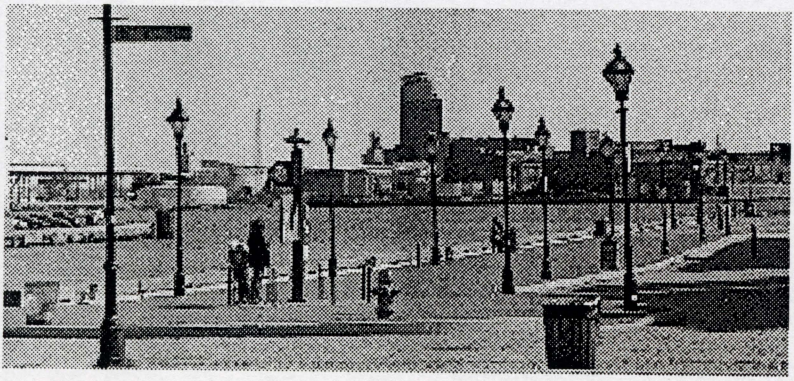
The music reverberates through every body on the floor. Dancers spasmodically move in motions that leave me lost in laughter. Drinkers and drunks surround the bar trying to seduce girls with their subversive speech. The D. J., a visitor from the north, lets the break-beats bring life to the lovely. Girls in tight tops and big baggy jeans slither across the floor in flamboyant grace. Their hair, tasseled and entangled in sweat, sweeps through the air and falls onto their faces, until fingers place it behind their ears.

The monotonous hours roll by as I help promote for the next big party. Events that promise unlimited entertainment are described on pieces of paper that will

litter the floor in later hours. Yet, I continue, carelessly placing papers in hands, hoping they will find their way to pockets. I know I will see the same faces and figures that frequent and delinquent this world around me, but it's a job. Drugs and their dealers come with smiles and miles of pleasantries to sell their product. Their lines are limitless and filled with the same subtlety as the sexual snakes that linger on the stools that surround the bar. Guards look away and police only worry about the public that pollutes the streets outside. Loitering and limitless donuts are the concern of the law.

The night ends when the ceiling light illuminates reality and the music makes its journey into silence. I pack up and walk over the cigarette covered concrete, through the smoke smothered air, to find my way home. I leave behind another night and let the lives of those inside become insignificant. In the dim dawn, passed-out people lie in fetal positions on benches and against broken bricks of neighborhood walls. The homeless, huddled, let legs walk over them without caution or care. I realize I am not far from falling next to them. The fate of my future falls short of dreams that fade with each passing day. I decide that decisions will have to be made for life to change in the direction that I have blindly begun to forget. The rays of the sun trip the light fantastic on a nearby fence, and I read the sign that states, "No Loitering," as I linger in the morning of the rest of my life.

Daniel Knach



Publish Me

It is involved always in your embrace,
that which I long for—

Dear review, lovely magazine, darling
book,

Can you hear me?
I call to you—perhaps
you are lost in your glossy dream
of cover's art, filmed slick
of your bland skin ultimate
oiled with desire—
the interested face, glowing
lamp, a little heft,
yours is a fine stock,
choice page, lucid font,
an easy float of money, credit,
clerk's approving glance,
the touch of your bright edge
in crinkling wrap, firmness
of the taut sheave, pages
bringing together in one place
the hand, the eye, the words—
Wake up. Hear me. Please.

It is only
your just precision, your good treatment
that I desire, like a piece of trash that expects
kindly recycling, respectable use,
a proper issue.

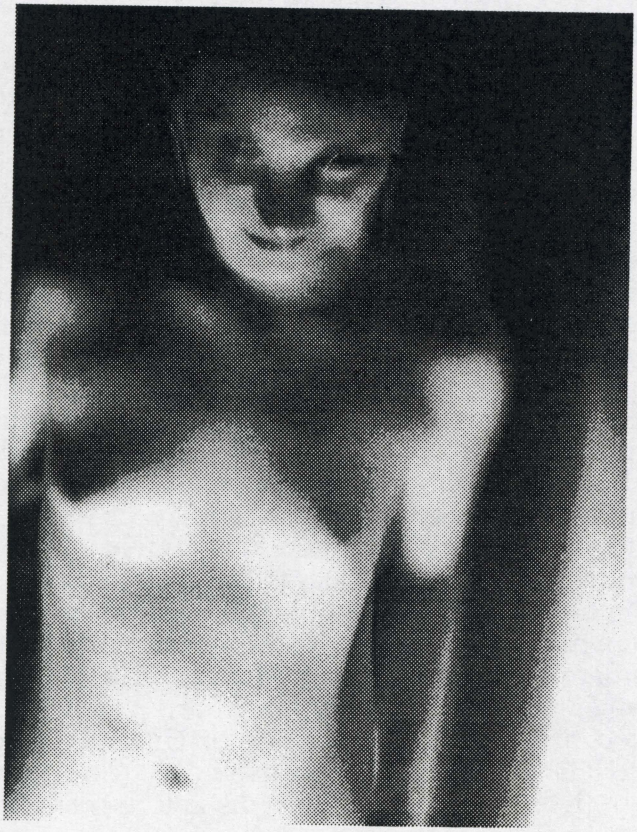
I do not speak to your readers and editors.
I imagine them weary, skeptical, thinking about
something else.
Scrupulous and clean-handed
they could tell me
many things about conviction, feeling,
and truthfulness,
about truly reading you—

Sweet volume,
it is to your own power

rather than to their discretion
that I appeal.
I dream of gracing you.
I see my name
in your table of contents, an ingredient
of a pleasing recipe for death.
I want only to be
with the others
in the cemetery of your type,
having matched my body
with your own in that realm
where you are assembled, where eyes
fill patiently with words
and there are no mistakes

or perhaps just one.

Gerald Majer



The Joys of Sex Ed

As silly as it seemed to me at the time, I still remember my sex education class with some fondness. I can't, and shouldn't, forget the smiles and laughs, the fun times. For me, recalling sex ed brings to mind one of the most ludicrous, but also one of the funniest movies I've ever watched. Surprisingly, this scholastic masterpiece was not intended, as far as I could tell, to amuse its audience. Quite the contrary and quite serious was its producer's purpose: to educate and enlighten. But the atmosphere of the times when the movie was made—the flowery seventies—prevented them from reaching the goal, thus begging the question: How much academic excellence should one expect out of a production entitled, "Am I Normal?"

I am told by fellow sex ed victims-slash-guinea pigs that the movie came in two versions: the boys' and the girls'. I've only ever seen the boys', but I doubt that the girls' was of significantly higher quality. The boys' variant consisted of an up-close-and-personal examination of going through puberty of a young gentleman. (The young gentleman had a very plain name, which must have not registered when I heard it, so I shall refer to him as Timmy.) The most notable scenes concerned a remarkably embarrassing erection, a wet dream, and a conversation about male genitalia with a known expert on the subject—a local zoo keeper.

Timmy endured a most painful adolescence in this *magnum opus* of cinema. In order to evoke a feeling of sympathy (or pity) from the cruel, middle-school male audience, he was subjected, together with his family, to moving from the rural home of his childhood to the rough city, where he had to make new friends and attend a new school. He had to cope with nostalgia. He had to learn to deal with zits. (The movie was shot in the seventies. Elementary Clearasil.)

On the first day of school those gosh-darn-evil script writers make Timmy accidentally bump into a female classmate—cute, naive, perky-lipped, and well-endowed. Timmy comes upon a hard problem. The viewers are treated to a close-up of Timmy's crotch, which lets the problem point itself out. (The movie was shot in the seventies. Bellbottoms galore.) Timmy is on

the verge of blushing and running away when the nerve-wrecking experience of talking to a girl finally ends.

Timmy goes home, dutifully does his homework, and is about to watch some TV when his dad calls him over. Timmy's parent asks him to bring out the baseball bat and the glove. The birds-and-the-bees metaphor is replaced by the unquestionably superior bat-and-glove metaphor. It's hard to tell who's more embarrassed by the attempt at the talk, the father or the son. The talk fails miserably. (The movie was shot in the seventies. No sex-talk pamphlets.)

Timmy goes to sleep (and wakes up just an hour or two later to find that something's just not right about the moist condition of his sheets. He is frightened. He doesn't know what to do. His mental state, heightened by the adrenaline rush, throws him into action: he runs into the kitchen, grabs catsup and mustard, and splatters condiments all over his linens to cover up the droplets of his dirty night-time deed. (The movie was shot in the seventies. Pardon me, didn't you have any Gray Poupon?)

By morning, Timmy still hasn't recovered from the dramatic events. He can't go to school. He doesn't know where to turn. He leaves for the zoo. The zoo keeper is his last hope. The zoo keeper comforts Timmy with the zoo keeper's years of expertise. "Yeah, I've seen them all. Seen the elephants, the rhinos, the giraffes....." The film ends when Timmy's entire class gloriously proceeds to the zoo to rescue Timmy. (The movie was shot in the seventies. Group recovery.)

If I liked one thing in my sex ed class, it was definitely the merriment. Ah, the illustrious days of middle school. I'll cherish them forever, but I am moving on to bigger, better, brighter things—just a couple of weeks ago I saw an episode of the Simpsons that had a short parody on sex ed. I quote from memory: "... and then the boy bunny noticed that he started to grow fur where he never had fur before." Brilliant, isn't it? Popular culture taking on the stagnant establishment of anti-sex education.

Remembering "Am I Normal?" made me wonder what a nineties' rendition of a sex ed movie would be like. I guess it all still depends on who's in charge of

making it. Frankly, I don't see the point of films with actual plot development and story line in sex ed courses. I know that in terms of learning, I would have much rather been treated to a candid lecture than a silly story about a kid distraught by puberty. But if someone were to actually make an update, I can't imagine that it would be terribly different. Oh sure, the bellbottoms would transform into baggy jeans, and the neighborhood zoo might be replaced by the free AIDS-testing clinic on the corner, where Timmy would get a safe-sex kit along with a booklet encouraging him to come out of the closet, but the basic problems would remain, because they have nothing to do with Timmy or the seventies—they are rooted in the negative way sex is perceived in our society.

What do people do when they cannot trust someone to give them the facts? They take the risk to find the knowledge that they want, even if the learning sometimes has to happen the hard way. Young people today are much more sex-smart than any generation before them, thanks to the availability of information from a variety of sources, ranging from pregnant and STD-carrying friends to the silver screen, but certainly not to a ludicrous sex ed concoction. The big question is, why is this normal?

Ilya Goldin

fall too easily to the floor
Carnival Prize friendships
abandoned emotion
in this three ring circus atmosphere.
How long until my soul collapses
Under the weight of the "amazing spectacle"
of the 2000 lb. man?
Forcing me to laugh and smile and cry
a plastic devotion
In a place where finding a shoulder to cry on
is just as easy
as popping a balloon with a dart.

dissolves too easily in the puddles
Artificial Sweetener love
feigned regret
in this hall of broken mirrors.
How long until my heart breaks down
overdosed on saccharine, caffeine,
and nicotine?
Forcing me to become and live and dream
a false existence
In a place where saying I love you
is just as easy
as drinking a cappuccino.

Charlene Benjamin

Self portrait 3

I'm a white shark searching the water
The smell of death in a funeral parlor
The quaint march, before Finnegan's Wake
I'm the image that you couldn't make

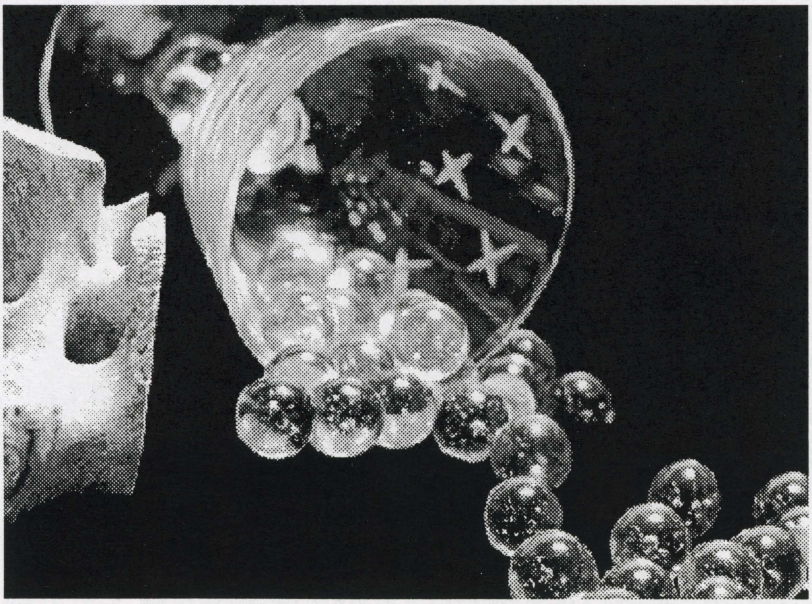
I'm the forbidding curse guarding a treasure
The frightful pain found in pleasure
The hangover morning, a noise in the dark
I'm the noose and the stopping heart

I'm the weary priest with a soul of pearl
The rotating head on a little girl
The stalker's plight, a gangster's hit
I'm the peace you can never fit

I'm a suicide corpse, blood on the carpet
A car hitting children, you couldn't stop it
The mucky air, an angel crying
I'm emptiness in the bathroom dying

Youngsters on the swingset playing
I'm the watcher in the darkness waiting.

Brett Butler



An elderly woman comes to the door.

"Does Margie May live here?"

"No, dear. I believe Margie lives in the house down the road."

Oh, but this house looks so pleasant. I turn from the door and hurry to my car. Two houses later, I find the right address. Once again I get out of my car and walk to the front door. After a few minutes of knocking, I hear muffled voices:

"That must be that girl."

"The one with the baby."

I fight confusion as I wonder why they don't just open the door. Minutes later a woman with long black hair comes out from behind the house.

"We don't use that door—ain't used it in years." She walks back around the house.

"Are you Margie May?"

"No, Margie's in the house. I'm Sherry."

I reluctantly follow her around the house, noticing for the first time the six junkyard cars parked in the back. A short woman about 5'4" comes to the screen door. I ask the question again, "Are you Margie May?"

"I'm Margie," she smiles and holds open the door.

She is nice enough, but funny looking. Like someone dropped her on her head when she was born.

I glance around the kitchen. It's clean. Small. Hardwood floor. We move into the living room. Margie invites me to sit.

But before sitting, I stare at the frail woman in the corner of the room, a blanket pulled up to her chin. The smell is that of a hospital and urine.

"Oh, that's just Grandma."

"Hi, how are you?"

As good as can be expected considering I've got shit all over my night gown and I'm tied to this chair and no one in this nut house will let me up. This is what I think she would say if she could. I was told before that she has Alzheimer's.

"I'm real glad you could come," Margie says.

"Yeah, me too. I wanted to meet you."

The woman with the long black hair, Sherry, appears again. It occurs to me that she resembles a witch.

"This is Sherry, she lives in the basement with my brother and their son. She'll be watching the baby if ever I can't."

Hold on. The wicked witch of the west is not touching my baby. "O.K. Nice to meet you."

A man and a boy come up from the basement. The boy looks just like his father from the eye glasses to the tennis shoes. Dorks, I think.

They nod hellos and disappear. Margie starts to tell me how excited she is about watching my baby. How glad she is that my Aunt Ronnie recommended her. How of course she'll get rid of all the house plants because if the baby ate a leaf his tongue would swell up and he would choke on it and die.

I nod my head, "I hadn't thought of that." Glancing at the twenty or so portraits on the wall I ask, "Who else lives here?"

"Really it's just Grandma and me all day. But Sherry and her husband and their son live in an apartment in the basement. And my dad, he works every other week eight to eight at night. But the other weeks he works eight to eight in the morning, then comes here to sleep. He sleeps all day."

Sure. The man doesn't get up to eat or go to the bathroom. My baby's cries won't disturb him.

Margie trails on, "And then there's Bob. He's a friend of the family. He lives here too."

A friend of the family. In the house. Does he work? Will he be here too? What happened to it's just Grandma and me?

"I'll show you the house."

I follow her down the short hall and peep my head into a room. The bathroom. Small. Clean. The next room is Grandma's room. Margie has it all planned out. "I'll put the baby in here for his naps."

I follow her into another room. Her father's room. The masculinity of it scares me. Men. Stories of sexual molestation. Mutilation. I step out of the room. Margie points to a closed door. "That's Bob's room. We won't go in there. The baby won't ever be in any of these, except Grandma's."

The hell he won't, I think. He won't ever step foot in this house. Margie leads me down the hallway, through the living room and into the basement. A man sits in

front of a TV playing Nintendo.

"This is Bob."

"Oh, I didn't know you were here." People were popping up all over the place. Bob stands up. He's thirty-something. Missing teeth. Retarded? He mumbles something. More thoughts of molestation. I back up. I walk up the stairs. Margie and I sit down again in the living room.

Sherry, hair and bangs wild, rages into the room, arms loaded down with a laundry basket. "I ain't doing laundry on Sunday. It's the Sabbath. We ain't supposed to do nothin' on the Lord's day." She whirls around. Margie rolls her eyes. Sherry comes back into the room. "I keep gittin' these damn nuisance calls. I'm gonna have this bastard locked up. You'll see, I'll call the police, I'll have a tracer put on the line."

Sherry leaves. Margie smiles, "She gets a little hyper sometimes."

A little? Sometimes? Who is this Bible- fanatic freak?

Margie tells me I don't have to worry; she doesn't watch TV, she plays records, she'll take the baby outside when there's nice weather. All the while Bob stands there, grinning, shaking his head in agreement. What the hell is his problem?

Someone's knocking on the door. Margie answers it. From my seat on the couch, the person is hardly visible but audible. Then from the corner of my eye I see the tan uniform. I listen to their voices. "So you see, someone just called 911. I heard it on my radio. They hung up. I thought maybe it was a domestic abuse situation. Sometimes they call, but the abuser takes the phone away."

Margie shakes her head in disbelief. "I don't know who it could be. My brother and wife and their son live in the basement. I'll go see if everything's all right." Margie disappears into the basement. The officer comes into plain view. She looks at me. I shrug my shoulders. I look at Grandma. It wasn't her—she's tied to the god-damn chair.

Margie comes up the steps. "They're gone. They were just here. I don't know where they went."

"Well, 911 isn't a joke. You say they have a son. How old?"

"Eight. But he knows better."

Bob, retard man, stands there grinning, shaking his head. I want to slap him. Did he make that call?

The officer leaves. Margie turns to me, "It's normally not this exciting around here."

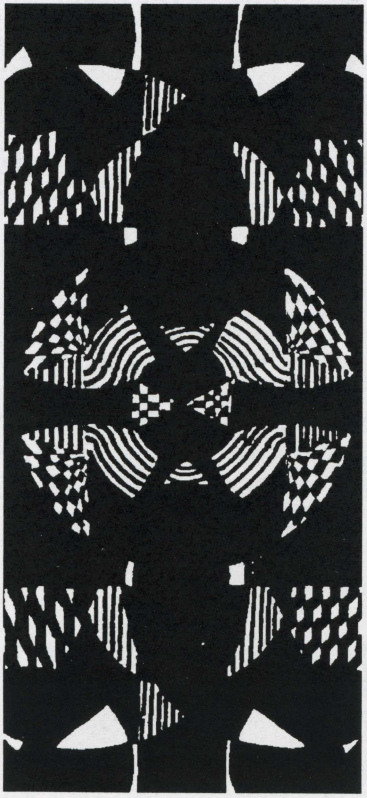
Bob says, "Yeah, yeah, exciting!"

I want to leave. I don't know how to say I should go. "My fish need feeding." Fish? I don't even have fish. "I should go."

Margie follows me to the screen door, babbling incessantly. "I'll buy a play pen, a car seat. . ."

"Thanks Margie, I'll get back to you real soon." I turn my back and run to my car. I shove the stick into reverse and squeal wheels pulling out. Once on the main road, I think, that place is an animal house. There's no way I am leaving my baby there. The baby pokes my ribs. He is silently agreeing.

Marie Schwartz



The Day the World Ended

The ravens were gleefully cawing in the trees
while the sun was lying down
creating a blood pool on the carpet of grass.

People gathered in their best winter suits
on those beautiful, rainy, October nights.
Not Sunday church
but praise God nonetheless.

When church ends,
    they take the crucifix home
and mourn the joyful martyrdom
while laughing with tears.

Something is amiss,
not everyone is home.
But it seems they're there,

Maybe hidden in the darkness
or camouflaged in the red moon;
Probably buried under the Technicolor fall leaves
or incinerated by the fire of the evening sky.

People come together
to laugh at their stories of failure,
trying to forget that they all failed

on the day the world ended.

Brett Butler

Knopfloch

Knopfloch,
That German button hole,
Discovered at thirteen
On the *Simplicity* tissue
For matching dresses,
When Saturdays were long,
When best friends were best one day
And worst the next,
When boys were giggles
And secrets weren't
And parents didn't understand
And *Knopfloch* was hilarious.

Carol Sapora

All Aboard

Iron biting against iron,
squealing desperately for traction,
slow hissing burst of steam,
pulsating — —increasing with speed.

Its thundering rumble shakes the earth
clamoring down the tracks and then gone,
all but the lonesome sound of its whistle.

Beth Horn

Haiku

THE RED SUN SETS LATE
SIMMERING ORANGE TO BLACK
UNLOCKING THE NIGHT

Whitney De Angelo

Pygmalion's Ivory Girl

He's here again. He comes in here every morning. He stands and stares at me. He takes his hands and touches me and talks to me. Oh, that I could tell him that I know he's here and I know what he's saying. My soul longs to answer him. My arms long to reach out and touch his face. He is larger than myself. His shoulders are strong and broad. His features are tan and his eyes, the windows to any creature's soul, are full of kindness and desire. His touch is warm and soft, so unlike mine. If I could have a wish granted by the Gods, it would be to become such a creature as this man. Oh, that I could step down from this pedestal and move freely around this room. I would step to the window and open it and experience the sun and wind on my face. As I am now, I am aware of these things, but I long to experience them. I want this man who comes to me every day to touch me with his large hands. I want to let him know that I have heard his words and I long to share his dreams. I want to reach up and touch his powerful arms and look into his warm, smoldering eyes. I would press my form against his and feel the warmth of his body. My mind is full of desires and dreams I cannot express! I beg the Gods of the universe to free me! Free me from this stiff, lifeless form and let me feel the warmth and freedom that human creatures enjoy.

Wait . . . I feel the warmth of the bright sun on my face. My fingers are bending and my feet are stepping down from this pedestal. The man takes me by the hand as I step down. His touch is soft, but it gives me a feeling of safety and well- being. At the same time, his nearness is unsettling to me. I want to be close to him, but being near him makes my heart pound in my chest and my breathing unsteady. His hand touches my hair and any fears I have simply vanish. We walk toward the glass wall. He calls this glass wall a mirror. As we walk toward it, I see two other people walking toward us. He tells me these aren't real people but images of him and me. For the first time I see myself. My hair is long, dark. The rest of my features are smaller than I had imagined. My skin is whiter than the man's and my shape is much different from his. We are different and yet we fit together perfectly. He stands behind me and I fit snugly

against his chest, his arms envelop me. He speaks and I feel the vibrations of his voice in his chest. It is a rumbling sound that stirs my feelings. I cannot keep my hands away from his body. I touch his face and bring my hands down his shoulders and arms. His form is warm and yet hard as granite. How can this form that is so strong and hard move about so easily to meet each movement I make? His hand lifts my face toward his and he presses his mouth to mine. He calls this a kiss and it is a wonderful thing.

I bless the Gods who granted my wish for this human life. What creature would choose to live as a lifeless, cold statue when this kind of existence is possible? If there is a dark side to this human existence, I do not care! Surely the pleasures outweigh anything else! The man has lifted me off the floor and I am curled up in his arms like a child. His touch has awakened feelings in me that I could never have imagined. Do not ask me to return to my former life. Compared to this it was not a life, merely an existence.

The man is here. . . I am his . . . he is mine.

Laurie Delph

Don't Look. . .

Don't look at this
ugly girl.
Without your
sneers and snickers
I was hurting anyway.
As I cry through my smiles
and smile through my tears.
I die inside
three times over.
As the pages turn
and the song plays
and the clouds cover the moon,
I cry.

Don't look at this ugly girl.
I never was a
good ball player anyway.
With my crooked fingers
and too big feet.
I cry through my smiles
and smile through my tears.
I stir inside
three times over.
As the sun warms the earth
and the wheels turn
and the movie credits roll,
I cry.

Don't look at this
ugly girl.
I always hated you anyway.
With your Easter dresses
and your too cool boyfriends.
I cry through my smiles
and smile through my tears.
I see inside
three times over.
As the snow falls outside
and the cars crash
and the carolers sing,
I cry.

Don't look at this
ugly girl.
You never really
mattered anyway.
With your facades
and masquerades.
I cry through my smiles
and smile through my tears.
I awake inside
three times over.
As the thunder cracks
and the ball players run
and the flowers bloom.
I smile.
I delve inside,
reaching my soul,
pulling it out into
the light.

Charlene Benjamin

Never

my days; never complete
my nights; never sound
my family; never bothered
my friends; never around
my head; never empty
my body; never whole
my thoughts; never ending
my dreams; never bold
my sadness; never gone
my happiness; never concrete
my image; never noticed
my soul; never sleek
my blood; never sour
my heart; never shy
my emotions; never constant
My Love for you; never dying.

Diana M. Gardner

Shataun

Under
the warm covers
he naps so peacefully
silently dreaming of biscuits
and bones

Beth Horn

Hope is an Ogre

Hope is an ogre disguised as a nun.
He loves to hear me hit the ground.
He swore you'd be mine sure as rise will the sun.
I don't see you around.

I guess the bait becomes useless
Once the lake's been over-fished.
But when every song on the radio makes you cry
You know you're finished.

Hope is the drug your eyes deal me,
Building up and tearing down;
The charm in the voice of that snake in the tree.
Hope is the smile of a future frown.

Too little leads to famine.
Too much will cause a flood.
Do I wanna cling to crumbs
Or sink into the mud?

Look both ways before you cross
Your fingers.

Jason Taft

A Relationship?

I know there used to be something there—
a *spark,* an *interest,* a feeling.

But it isn't there anymore.
Maybe it hasn't been for a long time.
Maybe I was just too afraid to see.

I suppose everything runs its course; I suppose even us.

It used to be different; now everything has changed.

You used to love me, you used to make me feel special.
Now you make me feel sad.

You used to make me smile.
Now you make me cry.

You used to compliment me.
Now you criticize.

You used to spend hours holding me.
Now you don't have time.

You used to love me.

Now you've forgotten how.

M. L. J.

From the Journal of Alex Sanchez, Biologist

No human has explored the Canyons before. I am referring to the jungle canyons of equatorial Ellodj on the large continent on the western hemisphere. Of course the Gatonus people have been exploring the Canyons for countless years and have kept excellent records of the flora and fauna. My assignment is to be the first human to crawl into the crevice. I'm going on this exploration mostly for myself. I could have easily looked through the Gatonus libraries for the details of these organisms, but I didn't get a Ph.D. so I could spend all day looking through the card catalog. I'm traveling with a Gatonus guide named Lifumas, who has told me to pack extra batteries for my flashlight and make sure my lap top computer has glowing letters.

Well, I guess I should explain the Canyons. The original name, translated from the Gatonus tongue, is "Crevices of the Shadow." They were originally normal canyons of solid rock millions of years ago, but erosion from the river and jungle rain has turned the walls from stone to soil. Plants quickly colonized them and soon the animals and other organisms followed. But the Canyons are still narrow slices in the rock between towering cliffs, so the plants have become densely clustered and all life beneath the canopy is tangled and crowded. The tree tops have evolved to compete for the sunlight making the undergrowth progressively dark. But evolution is never one to call it quits. Incredibly unique and bizarre adaptations allow life to continue here. I think the most incredible techniques have been employed by the plants themselves. But the predatory Avrons and their prey have also worked hard to survive.

I've fallen in love with the Avrons since I've been here. There is nothing on Earth like them. The Avrons are flying bird-like reptiles that soar over the tree canopies in search of food. Most species are the size of house cats with three to four- foot wingspans. The wing is made like a bat's; the three fingered hand has grown extra long second and third digits that support the wing membrane while the thumb is meager and ends with a short talon for grooming. The head is long and shaped

like a dinosaurian predator's. The eyes are quite large and face forward to target prey. The ears are also pushed forward to listen for any movement in the leaves and to hear if it's potential food or just rustling of the wind. The other end of the Avron has a long tail roughly three quarters as long as the body. It is somewhat stiff and ends in two keel shaped rudders for steering and stability. The animal's dorsal side is a mottled green and brown while the ventral is cream colored. This is to camouflage the animal from above and below. I wondered why the top predator of this ecosystem would need to camouflage itself from anything but its prey, then found out that some of the larger Avron species live like pirates, either stealing food or killing and eating the smaller. The most amazing feature of this animal is its tongue. It's built like an Earthling chameleon's tongue. Both are very long and well muscled with slimy, sticky bulbs at the end. But unlike the chameleon, the Avron soars over the canopy in search of food. If an Avron spots a target, it will circle until it gets a good shot, then fire its remarkable tongue like a guided missile. Then (if successful) the prey is eaten as an in-flight meal. These creatures are quite social and vocal. If one of them finds food, it will squawk or croak to the others so that they may find more. When they bed down for the night, they continue to squawk and croak at each other for a few minutes. I guess it's a roll call to see if everyone's there.

I managed to find a dead Avron when I was using the climbing gear. She hadn't decomposed too badly when I found her so I decided to perform a dissection. I had to dissect my Avron specimen in my tent because there were vast swarms of insects greedy for a taste, but even in my tent some of them got in. (I apologize to the scientific community for the occasional larva in the specimen or the overall smell of Raid on the Avron.) The animal life has done what most animals do when they live in total darkness; they've gone blind. Since there is never anything to see anyway, they just lose their eyes over the eons and learn how to live without them. The Avron innards consist of mostly lung and air bladder. This helps it collect large amounts of oxygen when flying and makes the animal as lightweight as

possible. The heart is also large for a creature this size. It's roughly the size of my fist (5 inches), so this and the large lungs helps the Avron to maintain a high energy rate without feeling tired too soon. The large breastbone has the wing muscles attached to it for true flight instead of gliding. The womb of this animal looks large enough to hold a baby instead of an egg, so the young are born alive.

Deeper into the Canyon is a much more forbidding environment. Shadows melt together into pure darkness and gloom, forcing all life here into permanent midnight. The only plants that can survive here are dormant seeds and tubers that simply wait for a tree to fall and let the light in for growth. Fungi of few colors but many forms are the most prevalent organisms here. There are some that work as decomposers but the most common are parasites on the trees or animals. The decomposers live a rich life in the gloom: tons of dead leaves and vegetation fall from the canopy every day to be "harvested." Decay occurs quickly in any rain forest on any planet so this did not surprise me.

The river takes up a good deal of space on the forest floor, but unlike most jungles, it isn't visible from the air because of the wide treetops. Aside from the torrential rains that strike every jungle on every planet, the water that runs off the mountain sides and canyon walls is a titanic deluge. Most of the trees here have powerful anchoring roots so that they can hold their ground. But occasionally one of the trees loses its grip on the soil and topples over. The vacant spot is immediately attacked by smaller plants, seeds, and dormant tubers and fruit that leap upon the spot like gold hunters from the Wild West. Any tree or plant that does manage to secure a new home must be prepared to survive future floods. Since it could spend the first few years of its life submerged, many young trees and seedlings spend their youth as aquatic plants. Eventually they grow "skeletons" of wood fiber in preparation for their emergence into the air and gravity.

Each life form in the Canyons adapts or disappears.

Erik Kiessling

The Land

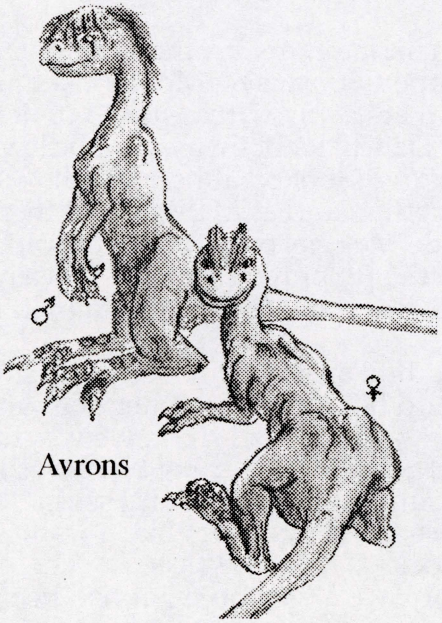
Sometimes, the moon spreads pale light
Across the land, and it is, truly,
Beautiful to look upon,
If only for a little while.

Usually, the land is in darkness,
Cold and abandoned, and no one
Wants to see it then,
Because it is, truly, frightening.

Never does the sun shine over the land.
I don't even know what color
The lighted land would be;
It just doesn't come.

Farewell, traveler. Enjoy your return
To the day. If you ever decide to visit,
I'll be here, waiting,
In the quiet night.

Greg Anderson



Avrons

One glorious Sunday afternoon, my family and I came home from church only to find that our lives had changed forever.

The big brown Ford station wagon pulled up in the blacktop driveway as I sat patiently in the space behind the back seat. I hated sitting back there. H-a-t-e-d it. It was so embarrassing. I was nine, nearly nine and a half. I shouldn't have had to sit back there like some sardine in a can. And I was hot. My body was begging me to change from that white cotton blouse and skirt printed with cherries and Chaquita bananas into that sexy, oh so grown-up, black and white polka-dotted little swimsuit.

When Mom finally let me out of the car, I ran up the sidewalk past the pink begonias. I smelled the chlorine coming from the backyard swimming pool as I walked into the yellow Rancher. I skipped through the kitchen, down the hallway, and hung a right into my ever so pink bedroom that I shared with my big sister, Melissa. I peeled off the fruity blouse and skirt and pulled on my sexy little number. But on the way to the pool, I was halted by Mom sniffling in her bedroom. And as I appeared at her door, poking my small head into the room, I saw her crying, holding a white piece of paper to her heart.

A moment later, my brother and sisters stood behind me in the open doorway. Mom looked up at us and wiped the tears away with a sweep of her hand. She frowned, "Daddy went away for a little while, maybe forever." And I looked at her, and at Mikey, my eleven year old brother, and at Melissa, and then I looked at Megan, little Meggie, only four years old, and I let out a howl from the pit of my stomach. I was pierced with pain. Dig a grave and lay me down in it. My daddy was gone?

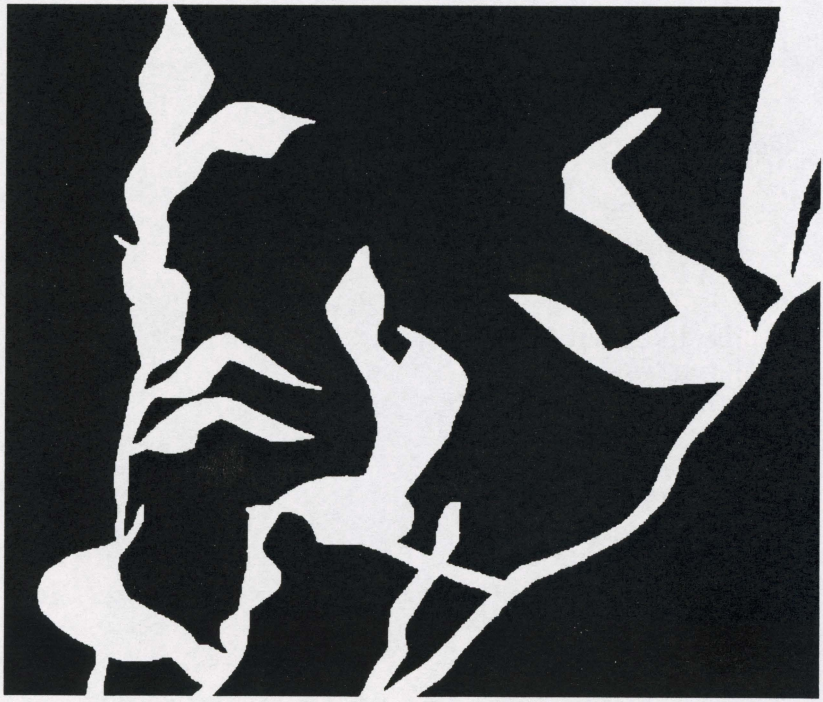
We huddled around Mom and she smoothed back all our hairs and held us close to her and whispered in our ears that we would be all right; we would get along just fine. And Megan with her big blue eyes looked up at all of us, so young, so innocent, and said, "Daddy's gone?" And Melissa burst into tears like a water balloon bashed against a rock.

Solemnly, we all sat on what had been Mommy's and

Daddy's bed, crying softly to ourselves, thinking of what was to become of us without our daddy. Who would tell me he had candy in his hand and when I would reach for it, pull me into his strong arms and hug me until I could hardly breathe? Who would fly down the stairs on his belly, head first, and holler and hoot while sailing across the carpet? Who would stick cheese doodles up his nose just to see us laugh? And beer bottle caps to his forehead? My daddy. The big kid. The man who protected me from the boogie man and the hairy monsters under my bed.

And as I peered down at myself, noticing the polka-dotted swimsuit for the first time since I found Mom crying in her bedroom, I thought that I would remember this day forever, the day I didn't get to frolic and splash in the swimming pool, because my daddy had left and there was still too much crying to do.

Marie Schwartz



Freeze Tag

A summer evening, it's hot outside.
Time to play, the gang's all here.
Feet in a circle, who will be it?

Light pole is home, so are the steps.
No out -in- the- street, we're not allowed.
You're Frozen! Unfreeze! I'm home!

Darkness falls, street lights come on.
Sitting on steps, we pant like dogs.

Jennifer Chittum

Advice

Dear Abby,

John likes Jen
Jen likes John
but John's engaged.

Jim likes Jen
Jen likes Jim
but now she doesn't.

Me,
I'm in a jam.
They want advice.

Confused Counselor

Terry McClung, Jr.

One Petal

February 1996

My grandfather, Richard Alvin Gorsuch, Sr., died this week. All I have left of him is a petal off the floral spray on his casket. I deserved more. He deserved more. He deserved to live a long life full of peace and prosperity.

There were a lot of people at his funeral. Some I knew; most I did not. There were so many flowers that the funeral home ran out of stools.

It is amazing how much is left unfinished when someone dies. My grandfather was supposed to go hunting with my uncle next week. He was supposed to finish working on his tractor. He was supposed to enjoy the last years of his life in his new house. He was supposed to do so many things—but now he never will.

I realize, now, that I should have spent more time listening to his stories. He could have told me more about his life on the farm. He could have told me what it was like living in the 1930's and 1940's. He could have told me how he became the person he was. I should have learned everything I could. I did not. I did not have time.

Time: what an odd concept. We have time to eat. We have time to sleep. We have time to work. Why do we not have time to learn all we can about the people in our lives? Why do we not make time? Why do we not use the time we have with our loved ones to the fullest? Why must it take death to make us slow down?

What did he leave behind? A grieving widow, two daughters, two sons, four granddaughters, and two grandsons. We have no pictures of him with his grandchildren. Most will not remember him. Some cannot help it. Others will find it hard to realize he even existed. Why did he have to go? It was his time.

Was it really his time? I do not think so. He was young; he had plans. He was supposed to be at my college graduation. He was supposed to see my sister start middle school. He was supposed to see me get married. He was supposed to have great grandchildren. He had a full life ahead of him. He had time. He was only sixty-two. I always thought that there would be time to learn from him. I thought there would be time to ask him all my questions. I never expected to hear the

words, "Your grandfather passed away," so soon. I knew they would come. But not now. Not when there is so much he was supposed to do. Not when there is so much I wanted to learn.

Why do we always put things off? Why do we forget what should be the most important thing to us? Why do we worry about making money and trying to squeeze as many things as possible into one day? Why does it take death to make us stop and examine our lives? Why must people die before we realize exactly how important they are to us?

I guess what I am trying to say is we should spend more time with our loved ones. Do not make the mistake that I made. Make sure you save more than a solitary petal.

Melissa McComas

Grandma Lev

I remember her smile
her eyes would squint and
a sparkle gazed from behind
silver-rimmed glasses

I see the comfort
of the living room
my living room
large orange easy chair
covered sofa
so many nights I
rested on

I see Grandpa, seated
making rugs for me
tigers
patterns crawling across the table
a row at a time

I smell the kitchen
Lawry's Season Salt
a frozen crackling burger
How I loved it there

I see a beautiful woman
eyes worn
hair thinning
clad in a bathrobe
sending me to sleep
face cream glistening on her cheeks
how comforting she was
how I loved it there

I taste the soap
Mr. Bubble, a ritual
treasure, sea in her bathroom
the towel closet on the left

I hear the bells that hang
from the front door
I belong, the bells
call to a home that
was mine

I see a petite hand
grasping one even smaller
"Shall we go to McCroy's?"
"Shall we buy some soldiers?"
was it Norman Rockwell I
was living?

I see the Weinberg Theater
the treats bought before-hand
carried in by purse
how special the rows of candy
how endless the choices
she gave me

I see the fire truck
"Let's go to the Firehouse."
she'd say
how the adventures never ended
money for Capello's
Fogle's down the street
"Here's a dollar."

I see the wrench turning
my first bike they
gave me finished
riding home down Second Avenue
Tothe most wonderful leaf pile a boy
could rake, hours
I never wanted to leave

I see the back steps
the tool shed
the car, big, huge, brown
how did it fit through that alley
were they lived

Oh, what a wonderful life
you gave me
you give me
All the security a child ever needed
rested in hugs
and kisses

How you made me feel so big
"He's bigger than Grandma now."
"He's the best grandson, the best."
you'd say
I knew it, I felt it
I love you

If I could return half the joy
you brought to me
the load would seem
unliftable
You are alive in my mind
you are the happiness
of my childhood
You were the filling in empty times
God, how you filled me up
I love you Gram
you are everything good to me

I see her there
hobbling a little
A bit slow
plastic hair bonnet
blue rain coat
worn shoes
The most beautiful woman in the world.

Jerome Crewe

One Hundred Hail Marys

one
two
three
four
boy
girl
boy
girl.
Little blue neckties all in a row,
shoes tied, beanies on, collars buttoned.
Walk straight, forward march, single file,
quick, click, tap the polished shoes.
one
two
three
four
Everyone accounted for, everyone here,
quiet now, like a mouse, genuflect, kneel.
Say a prayer for Sister Jo, count the rosary,
my turn, curtain opens, step inside, can't see.
four
three
two
one
hundred
Hail Marys.

Maggie Kelly Carroll

Life's Simple Math

Add happiness
Subtract pains
Divide hardships
Multiply love.

Caroline Barba

The Cry of the Day

The cry of the day,
    Now gone.
People getting out of cars,
hurrying and moving quickly
towards their houses.

Children wanting to share,
But parents pushing them to the side.
They say, "I just don't have time."
The beat of the clock
Like the fast paced life.
Very soon no more children at play.

The night not only represents
    the end of the day,
But the end of a time to which you
    can't go back.
The end of a so-called
    childhood.

Brenda Schisler

Trouble

My Revlon # 46
has served me well.
My trademark, weapon of choice.
So sensuous, sleek, and cool.
A glistening twisted dagger.
I thank my Cheshire-cat grin to
my Revlon # 46.
You never know where I'll show up,
with my tube of semi-automatic trouble.
A man killer.
A sexy red creme.
A "Dear John" note on the mirror,
or an invitation to a dream.
When you see me smiling eager, run for cover.
No man is safe when I'm wearing
my Revlon # 46.

Maggie Kelly Carroll

Actaeon came, with no more thought of hunting,
Till the next day, wandering, far from certain
Through unfamiliar woodland, till he entered
Diana's grove.

He saw the tall goddess standing higher than the nymphs. Her blond hair flowed in ringlets over the bronze roundness of her womanly beauty. The nymphs, seeing the man, pressed their bare breasts against Diana and, showing Actaeon their backs, hid her. Actaeon's green eyes pierced Diana's huntress heart and ignited her desire. She had never tasted the flesh of a man, and her curiosity spurred her on. Diana, having all these many years been touched and loved only by the nymphs, had fantasized about lying with a man. Pushing the nymphs aside, Diana trotted through the water to the side of the pond where Actaeon waited. He stood in awe as she climbed the soft, white beach. Water droplets trickled off her pink nipples as she stretched out her long, masculine arms. She yearned for his embrace in the same way that a baby yearns to be held by its mother. Actaeon, excited by the image of Diana, pulled her close to him, and the feel of her soft skin against him nearly exploded his manhood. Retreating into the forest they found a small opening among the trees that was conducive to lovemaking.

The nymphs, afraid that their Diana would be converted to a man-loving woman, took up their bows and arrows, and began their hunt for Actaeon. For hours Diana and Actaeon were hidden in the forest. With bodies entwined in rhythmic motion, they fulfilled their desire in harmonious splendor. When the time for climax arrived, the nymphs found them and, tearing at Actaeonís flesh, they separated him from Diana. Her lips were wet with passion and the heat of climax was upon her. She was furious at the nymphs for the frustration they caused her. Beating her breast, she told them: "Go, then, into the trees to receive for eternity, against your will, what you have sought to deprive me of."

They came toward her to embrace her and ask forgiveness, but Diana stood like a giant above them. In

fear they ran, swiftly, swiftly into the brush of the forest. They marvelled at their speed; they were not running, but hopping with large feet propelling them into the air. Their wet noses crinkled as they attempted to speak. In horror the nymphs realized that Diana had changed them into rabbits. Never again would they feel pleasure from the touch of one another. They were forever doomed to be mounted by the male and to reproduce.

Diana's anger was not satisfied. She threw Actaeon down and mounted him. Actaeon, weakened by the nymphsí attack was unable to bring her to fulfillment. Driven by the pain of unrelieved passion, she told him: "May you walk forever with your manly tool turned to stone so that the juices of fulfilled desire shall never again flow from you." Leaving him there in suffering, she turned and ran. She ran until her energy was spent and then, collapsing alone and naked beside the pond, she slept.

So Diana's heart was hardened, and her hatred for men rekindled.

Dawn Davis

The First Day of School

The country schoolhouse stands
like a British sentinel
at the top of the hill.
A winding dirt path,
many a pair of patent leathers got
dusty there.
A picket fence surrounds,
once white, now gray and peeling.
The see-saw, old and rusting,
rests upon the dusty ground.
The warped wooden swings
move gently in the crisp September breeze.
A group of apple trees
shade the tiny playground;
A tarnished silver bell
teeters on top of the school.
It watches
generations of children playing at its door.
Today, I enter

Amy LaRock

Raven's Nest

Jane and Todd had just moved into a quaint little house in the town of Willow Ridge. Jane and Todd had searched for months before they found the perfect place to live. They both desired the country and quiet. This house was perfect. It was set in the country, with the closest house being the Raven's Nest Mansion, which had been vacated many years ago. Jane, an architect, was fascinated with the mansion. She could not figure out why anyone would just abandon it.

The next day, Jane went into town to the library. She decided to do some research on the house and its ancient inhabitants. She approached the courtesy desk to inquire about any special town history section the library might have. The attendant looked up and smiled. She asked Jane if there was anything special she was interested in. Jane told her about the Raven's Nest. The attendant turned and stared at her. She said that there was nothing she could help her with and walked away. Jane was puzzled by this behavior but shrugged it off and headed for the periodicals. She thought she would try her luck in old newspaper articles. To her surprise, all the articles about Raven's Nest were missing. Feeling discouraged and confused, she started home.

That evening, after dinner, Jane told Todd of her misfortunes. Todd shrugged and said that it was just a house and she was reading too much into it. Jane decided he was right and headed to her room. She was sitting at her vanity, when she noticed a light in the upstairs mansion window. She got dressed and went outside. The light was still there. She decided to check it out. The entrance to the mansion was locked, but she simply climbed over the old iron fence. The path to the house was rocky and filled with debris. She got closer and closer to the house. She approached the steps and entered the front door.

The house was very cold and damp. Jane ascended the staircase to the upstairs chambers. She could hear a child crying in the far bedroom. She approached the bedroom slowly and opened the door. She could feel the fear rise in her throat. On the bed sat a small child and a rottweiler puppy. The child was transparent. Jane

stifled a scream and approached the bed. The child turned around and jumped through the window. Jane ran to the window, but there was nothing there; then she heard a soft, low growl come from behind her. She turned around and felt shear terror at what she saw there—two green eyes, narrowed into slits and the strong, powerful jaws with saliva dripping from them. The teeth were pearl white and as sharp as razors. The loins were glistening with the tension of muscles, ready to spring. This was not a puppy anymore, but a full-grown, one hundred and eighty pound beast of terror. Jane had no escape but to jump. She turned and looked out the window. It was a long fall, but it was her only chance.

Todd stood over Jane's bed in the hospital. He tried to understand why she would jump out of a second story window. The doctor talked to Todd and told him that all she kept repeating was the word, "Sierra."

The library attendant entered the room and asked to speak to Todd outside. She told Todd about the story of the McAndrew family. Elizabeth McAndrew was given a rottweiler puppy on her seventh birthday. The puppy attacked two of the townspeople, and it was decided that the dog should be destroyed. Elizabeth couldn't bear the thought of her beloved pet being destroyed so she jumped from her bedroom window and died.

Todd said that the story was fascinating, but he didn't understand what it had to do with Jane and her condition. The attendant stared at Todd and said that Elizabeth's puppy was named "Sierra."

Lisa Baublitz

A Street with No Name

A street with no name,
boys with no faces
who play wiffle ball
in the middle of the road.

A street with no name,
and friends with cool toys
who take them for granted
and never share.

A street with no name,
and guys with weird dogs
who get a bigger allowance
and have cooler parents.

A street with no name,
and the girl across the road,
who we never knew lived there,
and then I met her.

A street with no name,
and Old Mr. Reter's,
which closed awhile ago,
so we rode to Santoni's.

A street with no name,
and kids with bikes
who graduate to ten-speeds
and think, "Now I can go anywhere."

A street with no name,
and that girl across the road
who we all ended up liking,
and I went to school with her.

A street with no name,
like any other . . .
except for us;
we like to think we're special.

A street with no name,
and that girl across the road,
who became my best friend.
She changes every day.

A street with no name,
and our cars lined up along the curb,
each one with a nickname;
they all suck in their own ways.

A street with no name,
might seem like any other
but might house such a world
that boys with no faces
might never grow up.

Andrew L. Smith

Untitled

Happiness is just an illusion;
It flickers and dances away
in the harsh glow of the moon.
At times it seems so near,
but in reality it is so far away
no grasp could possibly reach it.
Others have it to own,
but I can't catch it to borrow.
It eludes me, as the fish does the trap.
The only difference—the trap often
catches its tender prey.

Happiness swims just out of reach,
carried away by the joy of others.
It daunts and teases as no other emotion knows how;
it gives you small hope and then leads to
black despair.
Its purpose is to cause me pain and tears;
it does so indiscriminately and does it so well.
Happiness gives no thought to its wake of broken hearts;
mine joins and follows the path of a thousand
silent others.

Adina Kadden

Oxblood

Oxblood, bruised and angry faces
lined together with boots and braces
patches, pins, covering bomber flights
smooth crafted handles on sharpened knives
Fresh-cut heads, polish in leather
bloody sidewalks under worn storm weather
Torn, stretched T-shirts, stout on tap
crews of skinheads waiting to attack
Broken knuckles, broken noses
looming cloud that fear imposes
threatening words, lips that mumble
the stale wet ground at the end of a rumble

Brett Butler

Time

And how are you really?
Someone who doesn't care asks.
Well, do you want the truth?
'cause
I Don't Really Know.
One moment, I am
brighter
luckier
flashier
than I've been in my whole life
and
the
next
I am a miserable
broken
carapace
of the person I was in the previous second which lasted
an
e t e r n i t y
in my mind.
Placing myself on a
pedestal
of anticipation, the
moment evades me,
even as I look
down-
ward
and call it by name.
Too much time. Too little time.
A broken watch that keeps moving
out
of
sync.
Unlike even a stopped one which will at least be right
two
times
a day . . . is doomed to be wrong
always.
Eight days a week.
Too little time. Too much time.

Charlene Benjamin

Art Work and Photography

Tracy Lacher ..... Cover and layout
Erin Killian ..... Table of Contents

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